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## Where Was Our Man in Havana?

To keep track of what is going on in Cuba, the U.S. employs both the most advanced and the most ancient technology: ELINT (electronic intelligence) and HUMINT (human eyes and ears). Apparently there was not enough of either in the case of the belatedly discovered Soviet brigade.

For an ongoing broad survey of the terrain below, CIA Director Stansfield Turner and other U.S. intelligence chiefs rely on spy satellites. Using precision-tooled, high-resolution lenses, a satellite can take a remarkably clear photograph of a one-foot object from 100 miles overhead. The pictures, which are recorded in black and white, color or infra-red, may be transmitted almost instantaneously to ground stations in the U.S. The satellite is also equipped with electronic listening devices that can pick up military and government radio messages and store them on endless miles of tape.

If more information on a particular area is needed, aircraft can be called upon to supplement the satellite. The needle-sleek Lockheed SR-71 (Blackbird), which flies more than three times as fast as sound at above 85,000 ft., makes occasional photo-reconnaissance runs over Cuba. The old stand-by, the U-2, also goes on photographic and electronic "ferreting" missions, but it remains almost 20 miles high and well outside Cuban airspace to keep from being shot down.



Turner testifying about Cuba

Despite all the electronic wizardry, human snooping is still needed to fill in gaps. But the task of infiltration is formidable in a tightly controlled garrison state like Cuba, where local security forces are reinforced by Soviet ones. Not even Cubans are allowed to go near the Soviet command post, east of Havana.

It was at least ten years ago that U.S. intelligence first got an inkling that a Soviet combat unit might possibly be in Cuba. But the nation was embroiled in the Viet Nam War, and intelligence was largely focused on Southeast Asia; Cuba had low priority. After the war, intelligence operations were reassigned both in the field and in Washington, where it takes many people and much equipment to sort out incoming information. Cuba watching was increased, but not significantly. Even so, evidence emerged

confirming the presence of a mysteriously active Soviet headquarters.

Shortly after President Carter took office in January 1977, he canceled the SR-71 flights over Cuba as part of a general policy of cutting back intelligence operations. The flights were not resumed until November 1978, when American intelligence began to fear that the Soviet MiG-23s stationed in Cuba might be capable of carrying nuclear weapons. But satellite and SR-71 photos did not clear up the matter. It took HUMINT to do the job. An agent with access to the MiG airfield was sent in to take a snapshot of a friend who just happened to be standing in front of a MiG engine. The picture revealed an intake valve used only on non-nuclear planes.

Last spring U.S. intelligence pressed harder to find out more about the Soviet command post. Though Soviet combat troops had not been sighted, part of the intelligence community felt that the headquarters signified their presence. In mid-July increased reconnaissance finally revealed the troops. They were in Soviet uniform and were operating Soviet equipment, but were they Soviets or Cubans? Satellites were sent in for a closer look. This time the photos revealed that the troops were indeed Soviets.

Why did it take U.S. intelligence so long to reach a not so remarkable conclusion? The intelligence did not seem to be faulty so much as underused. Explained Ray Cline, former Deputy Director for Intelligence of the CIA and now executive director for studies at Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies: "It's one of the really great intelligence problems: where to put your talent and your time." In recent years, intelligence has concentrated on the areas of greatest concern: the Middle East and SALT. Given higher priority in Washington, the Soviets could have been detected much sooner. The best intelligence that money can buy still depends on basic political judgments.